

Message Text

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PAGE 01 HAVANA 01074 260400Z
ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-12 NEA-10 ISO-00 IO-13 CIAE-00
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P R 252154Z APR 78
FM USINT HAVANA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1724
INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
AMEMBASSY MOSADISCIO
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
USINT BAGHDAD

C O N F I D E N T I A L HAVANA 1074

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: PDEV MILI ET SO CU
SUBJ: MENGISTU VISIT TO CUBA

REF: HAVANA 1056.

1. MENGISTU, APRIL 24, CONTINUED HIS HIGHLY-PUBLICIZED TRIP THROUGH CUBA, ACCOMPANYING FIDEL CASTRO IN A VISIT TO MONCADA BARRACKS AND OTHER REVOLUTIONARY MONUMENTS IN SANTIAGO DE CUBA. MEANWHILE, CUBAN GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCED THAT MENGISTU AND FIDEL WILL BE SPEAKING IN MASSIVE PUBLIC RALLY IN PLAZA DE LA REVOLUCION, HAVANA, APRIL 26. PARTY AND MASS ORGANIZATIONS IN HAVE CALLED FOR MOBILIZATION OF ONE MILLION PEOPLE FOR OCCASION.

2. BEGIN COMMENT: SCHEDULING OF PUBLIC RALLY, APRIL 26, SUGGESTS THAT MENGISTU WILL BE LEAVING CUBA BEFORE MAY 1 WHEN ANOTHER MASS RALLY IS PLANNED. THUS, IF ANY SECRET NEGOTIATIONS ARE TAKING PLACE WITH ERITREANS (WE STILL HAVE NOT BEEN ABLE TO CONFIRM THEIR PRESENCE HERE), THEY ARE NOT LIKELY TO BE PROLONGED OR DEFINITIVE. END COMMENT.
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3. FOLLOWING NEW REPORTS HAVE BEEN RECEIVED ON ERITREAN SITUATION.

4. UNNAMED MEMBER OF CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF CUBAN COMMUNIST PARTY DENIED TO YUGOSLAV AMBASSADOR, APRIL 22, THAT ERITREAN DELEGATION IS NOW IN CUBA. DENIAL WAS ECHOED

TO YUGOSLAV AMBASSADOR BY MEMBERS OF MENGISTU OFFICIAL PARTY.

5. YUGOSLAV EMBASSY HAS RECEIVED REPORTS THAT GEORGE HABBASH (CURRENTLY STILL BELIEVED TO BE IN CUBA), HAD CONTACTS WITH EPLF OFFICIALS IN BAGHDAD BEFORE ARRIVING IN CUBA. YUGOSLAVS SPECULATE THAT HABBASH MAY BE PURSUING INTERMEDIARY ROLE BETWEEN CUBANS, EPLF, AND ETHIOPIANS.

6. YUGOSLAV AMBASSADOR WAS TOLD, APRIL 22, BY MEMBER OF MENGISTU OFFICIAL PARTY THAT ETHIOPIAN LEADER'S POSITION HAS SOFTENED TOWARD YUGOSLAV IDEA OF CREATING "AUTONOMOUS" ERITREA WITHIN ETHIOPIAN "FEDERATION". IDEA HAD EARLIER ENCOUNTERED HOSTILE REACTION WHEN SURFACED BY YUGOSLAV FOREIGN MINISTER IN ADDIS. YUGOSLAVS ARE NOT CERTAIN OF SINCERITY OF APRIL 22 ETHIOPIAN REACTION.

7. SPANISH EMBASSY INDICATES THAT CUBAN AMBASSADOR TO ETHIOPIA PEREZ NOVOA (BEFORE MENGISTU DEPARTURE FROM ADDIS) REPORTEDLY TOLD SPANISH AMBASSADOR TO ETHIOPIA THAT SOME CUBAN TROOPS WOULD BE MOVED TO PORT OF MASSAWA, BUT THAT CUBANS WOULD NOT INTERVENE MILITARILY AGAINST ERITREANS.
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